

A. DUTIES

The Port Veterinarian serves as Veterinary Medical Officer in a regulatory and enforcement agency with the responsibility for overall station import/export operations at one or more air, ocean, or land border ports of entry/export to preclude international movement of animals, animal products, by-products, or associated materials and vectors capable of causing introduction of animal diseases. The Veterinary Medical Officer:

- plans and coordinates medical and program procedures to deal with animals and their by-products offered for importation into the U.S. for the purpose of determining Foreign Animal Disease (FAD) and their freedom from infestation and/or infectious, contagious or communicable diseases.
- evaluates and coordinates the inspection, approval and surveillance systems of establishments involved in handling restricted animals and products such as valuable breeding stock, zoo animals, exotic birds, hides, feathers, and trophies.
- examines purebred animals declared for entry into the US under provisions of the Tariff Act to assure such animals are free from disease, are properly identified, and accompanying documents are in order (e.g. health certificates, import/export permits and transit permits), and issues certificates of pure breeding for free entry of such inspected and identified animals.
- insures Customs, Immigration, Plant Protection and Quarantine, FSIS, AMS, State departments, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Postal Service, U.S. Public Health, and all other cooperating agencies and officials are kept informed and familiar with appropriate regulations and procedures relative to the entry and export of animals and their by-products or other restricted materials, and carried out accordingly. Maintains working relationship with above.
- inspects and coordinates inspection of animals being exported to determine their freedom from evidence of infectious, contagious or communicable disease or parasitism, and certifies such shipments meet the requirements as listed in Federal Regulations or as specified in import health agreements with countries of destination. Also oversees or monitors such exports in transit through the port(s).
- determines, based on medical opinions and guidelines, the disposition of smuggled or otherwise ineligible animals, products, and associated materials subject to international movement.
- inspects, quarantines, and releases poultry and birds offered for entry. Checks health certificates, import permits, and other accompanying documents to determine they meet all U.S. import requirements and assist other cooperating government agencies such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Examines birds for symptoms of Newcastle Disease and other communicable diseases and conducts the required testing and quarantine. The incumbent has direct responsibility for the health and welfare of animals entering, leaving and remaining in the quarantine station.

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- may operate and manage USDA-owned bird quarantine facilities including care and feeding, maintenance, sanitation, procurement of supplies, disease control and treatment, disposal and disinfection, and safety. Oversees the supervision of quarantine of privately owned bird quarantine stations.
 - advises brokers, airline and shipping officials and personnel, importers and exporters, cooperating Federal, State, and local officials, and the public on applicable laws, rules, and regulations, particularly with regard to all export or import activities. Conducts necessary correspondence related to the export and import of animals and related products. Maintains necessary records and prepares required reports. Where applicable, may represent the agency in dealing with Mexican or Canadian counterpart(s), governmental officials, importers, U.S. Customs, U.S. Border Patrol, and others.
 - may supervise and train lay inspectors or Animal Health Technicians who work under their supervision. Supervises and trains Veterinary Medical Officers as the needs of the service require.
 - may represent the agency before public and private livestock groups and individuals for the promotion of disease prevention, control, and eradication programs, and before air and sea animal transportation groups and individuals for the promotion of safe and humane shipping procedures for animals.
 - evaluates and recommends modification of inspection procedures and facilities in coordination with U.S. Customs Service to accommodate changes in requirements and to increase effectiveness and efficiency. The incumbent conducts safety monitoring and management of isolation and manufacturing facilities to ensure compliance with regulations.
 - maintains contacts with foreign and domestic professional and industry officials to monitor and evaluate significance of potential disease situations at points of origin and adapts surveillance modifications.
 - develops, maintains and directs safe, humane care and treatment of animals to insure adequate, sanitary inspection facilities and operations.
 - interprets agency memoranda, regulations, and guidelines; assures uniform enforcement; reviews new veterinary medical literature and may attend continuing education seminars.
 - may enforce the Animal Welfare Act and Horse Protection Act, including licensing and inspecting dealers and exhibitors, registering and inspecting research facilities, and investigating complaints and alleged violations.
 - may serve on an emergency disease eradication task force which has responsibility for instituting immediate quarantine, diagnostic controls, and eradication measures to effectively localize and eliminate the epidemic.
 - may be responsible for cooperative State/Federal programs in an assigned area.

B. FACTORS

1. Knowledge Required by the Position

FL 1-7, 1250 points

Mastery of veterinary medical science concepts, principles, and practices in the field of animal medicine. The Veterinarian is considered a medical expert in the application of veterinary medicine designed to accurately diagnose and effectively control or treat infected or exposed animals offered for movement in international commerce.

Knowledge and skills necessary to probe all factors of endemic and exotic diseases such as cause and environment of various disease producing organisms, management practices, and serological, bacteriological or virological complications or other related problems to apply new methodology and solutions at the station level.

Knowledge of laws and regulations and other requirements relating to international and interstate movements of animals, products, and by-products necessary to assure compliance with accepted standards of disease prevention and humane and safe movement.

Knowledge of disease control program at origin or destination of animals, products, and by-products to better evaluate and determine disposition in international or interstate commerce.

Knowledge and understanding of animal husbandry, accepted practice, species peculiarities, and special requirements to provide for safe and humane conditions (incl. facilities and restraint).

A thorough knowledge of U. S. Customs Service laws and organization to effectively facilitate the joint mission.

Ability to communicate orally with international industry representatives relative to importing and exporting requirements.

Sufficient computer skills to process shipments, e.g. using and updating word processing and database software.

2. Supervisory Controls

FL 2-4, 450 points

The supervisor assigns broad general responsibilities for program activities and provides agency policies, memoranda and regulations. Incumbent independently plans, coordinates, and completes station responsibilities.

Controversial work situations usually require immediate and final decision making; however, sensitive issues may require consultation for resolution. The veterinarian keeps the supervisor informed of progress, potentially controversial matters, or far reaching implications. For example, if a situation arises involving animal welfare, the incumbent is required to take corrective action on behalf of the animal. This could result in additional time and costs for the transportation carrier.

Completed work is reviewed only from an overall standpoint in terms of feasibility, compatibility with other work, or effectiveness in meeting requirements or expected results. Some work is time critical, such as processing and sending out equine blood samples.

3. Guidelines

FL 3-4, 450 points

These consist of general agency policies, regulations, memoranda, and guidelines and those of other agencies, as well as veterinary medical literature, industry publications, past precedents and recognized practices of disease diagnosis and control. Incumbent is responsible for the interpretation of guidelines and regulations for situations which fall outside usual practices or for new situations which require initiative and resourcefulness in selection and adaptation to arrive at solution of problems.

4. Complexity

FL 4-4, 225 points

Plans, directs, or conducts the examination of varied species of animals, animal products and by-products (e.g. poultry eggs and semen tanks), associated materials, vectors, and accompanying certification in safe, humane, adequate, sanitary inspection facilities.

Examinations vary according to species and purpose, from the "visual observation" to the thorough "hands on" examination requiring additional laboratory tests. Examinations involve the selection and adoption of humane, safe, adequate restraint methods for various animals. Animals, products, and by-products are frequently presented with incomplete or conflicting certification or medical data.

The work requires making many decisions concerning such things as conflicting interests involved, established precedents, planning of the work, or refining the methods to be used.

The work entails organizational skills to accept multiple shipments simultaneously to process in a timely manner to avoid financial loss for the producer and transportation company. Regulation changes or negotiation processes not communicated from the foreign country to NCIE or to the area office complicates the VMO's ability to accurately and efficiently process shipments.

5. Scope and Effect

FL 5-4, 225 points

The purpose of the position is to make professionally based judgments to prevent the import or export of livestock, birds, by-products, associated materials, or vectors capable of introducing diseases that can affect animal or human health. The decisions made and final actions taken, based on the professional judgment of the Port Veterinarian, assure that animals, products, and by-products offered for import/export meet disease free standards.

The domestic impact of such introduction has caused severe economic loss to the animal industries. Past export of diseased or infected animals or products capable of transmitting disease has impacted seriously on foreign trade by eliminating those markets.

6. Personal Contacts

FL 6-3, 60 points

The majority of contacts are with foreign-based or domestic non-governmental persons, firms, or organizations having either an economic interest in or sentimental attachment to the animals affected by the work service. The incumbent serves as a highly visible resource to field questions from public, customs, state and federal personnel throughout the nation and industry.

These contacts include importers/exporters or owners, custom house brokerages, agents, registry and livestock association officials, bird fanciers and dealers, transportation companies, horse clubs and horse racing associations, foreign and domestic private veterinarians, and consulate staff. Governmental contacts are with other associated agencies, both foreign and domestic, concerned with international and interstate movement of animals and products.

7. Purpose of Contacts

FL 7-3, 120 points

Persuading and influencing others to gain compliance, exchanging information, interpreting regulations, and resolving problems and disagreements with others in authority and experts in the field of veterinary medicine. Receiving and providing consultation on medical problems, planning and coordinating inspections and other activities.

8. Physical Demands

FL 8-3, 50 points

The work involves strenuous physical demands to handle and restrain livestock, which includes defending against physical attack by confused or distressed livestock or similar sized animals confined in cramped stalls or similar accommodations. There is also crouching during the examination of livestock, manual restraint of livestock, and prolonged kneeling in areas of high animal concentration for collection of blood samples.

9. Work Environment

FL 9-3, 50 points

Personal safety and the safety of the animals are constant concerns. There is exposure to discomforts and disease conditions and agents, some of which are highly contagious, infectious, noxious, and communicable to humans. Special clothing, equipment, and other safeguards are required. The veterinarian will encounter widely varying conditions. The work area may be dusty and have extremely slippery surfaces, with temperatures ranging from very cold to very hot, with varying degrees of humidity, high levels of ammonia from feces, and excessively high pitched noises, e.g., squealing swine. Also requires working with toxic agents such as disinfectants.

The loading and monitoring of import/export animal shipments can occur at various hours. This requires the incumbent to be on-call and/or available even after completion of an earlier shift and can affect consistency in processing shipments.

There may be commuting distances where extended periods of driving are possible in a variety of terrains and environments.